

Survey of the Bible part 75 **Job Introduction**

When we come to the book of Job it is worth noting that very little is known of this man as it relates to the exact time in which he lived. There is no consensus among scholars, but despite that we can be sure that he was a real person who lived in a real area of the middle-east.

As to the issue of where Job lived we need only go to the first verse.

Job 1:1 ^{NAU} There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job;

There are only three references to the land of Uz; one of which we have before us here in the first verse of Job.

Jeremiah 25:15-20 ¹⁵ For thus the LORD, the God of Israel, says to me, "Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. ¹⁶ "They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them." ¹⁷ Then I took the cup from the LORD'S hand and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and its kings *and* its princes, to make them a ruin, a horror, a hissing and a curse, as it is this day; ¹⁹ Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes and all his people; ²⁰ and all the foreign people, *all the kings of the land of Uz*, all the kings of the land of the Philistines

^{NAU} **Lamentations 4:21** Rejoice and be glad, O *daughter of Edom*, *Who dwells in the land of Uz*; But the cup will come around to you as well, You will become drunk and make yourself naked.

The name Uz comes from an individual by that name who was the son of Aram, making him the grandson of Shem, one of the sons of Noah.

Genesis 10:22-23 ²² The sons of Shem *were* Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram. ²³ The sons of Aram *were* Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash.

Now keep in mind that by the time Uz was born it was many years after the flood and we are told that the sons of Noah all headed east and populated different parts of the world.

Each son and his family would have settled into different lands and would have populated them, each designating that part of the world as a nation, or the land of that family.

Shem's descendants, which would have included Aram his son, and the grandson, Uz, would have settled together. We're told where they settled in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 10:30 ³⁰ Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east.

So, where is Mesha and Sephar? No one really knows. However, most scholars agree that the sons of Shem are the ancestors of the Semitic peoples we see in the middle-east today.

From the web site biblebelievers.org we read this: "Shem was the progenitor of all the Semitic races. The name, Shem, is rendered as Sumu in the Akkadian inscriptions. At the time of the scattering of the nations from Babel, the descendants of **Japheth** (see 1) migrated to the north and north-west of Shinar, mainly towards Europe. They also migrated to the south-east towards the Indian sub-continent, and thence to the Far East. The descendants of Shem and Ham however, shared between them the southern and central regions of Asia Minor and Arabia, with Ham's descendants subsequently spreading onto the African continent. This, of course, meant that a certain amount of intermingling took place between the posterities of Shem and Ham and it is consequently sometimes difficult to assess whether certain early nations were predominantly Semitic or **Hamitic**."

"Sometimes, for example, a people descended from Ham would adopt a Semitic language. Sometimes, a Semitic people would adopt an Indo-European (Japhetic) tongue, and this has naturally led to some confusion over certain archaeological or documentary aspects of the evidence."

And so, if someone is looking for a neat and clean cut between the three sons of Noah as all staying in their own families and all settling in distinctly different places, North, South, East and West, we just don't understand how peoples of the world populate the world.

There is always intermingling. There is always crossing of borders and families having alliances with each other as they sometimes share those borders.

One thing we can all agree on is that it wasn't until after the tower of Babel incident that all three families were forced to these other areas as they had no prior reason to separate because they all shared a common language.

And so, it wasn't until Babel and God's judgment on these three main families that they then had to venture out and we see this in Genesis 10 as well.

Genesis 10:31 ³¹ These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.

What is the clue here that this is a post Babel migration?

By this time they had their own languages, (note the plural), and they now have their own lands according to their nations, which is to say, according to their family names.

But back to our text and the issue of where Uz is. Again, we really don't know other than to say it was probably somewhere in the middle-east since this is generally where the family of Shem ended up.

What is noteworthy is the fact that there is another name that is associated with Uz and it's the name Edom. We read of this earlier.

^{NAU} **Lamentations 4:21** Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, Who dwells in the land of Uz; *But* the cup will come around to you as well, You will become drunk and make yourself naked.

Edom is another name for Esau, the brother of Jacob. He was a hunter and had sold his birthright to his brother, Jacob. The daughter of Edom mentioned in Lamentations would be the offspring of Esau who dwelled in the land of Uz.

And so, Edom would have included not just a people but a region associated with the descendants of Esau and we know that this region is simply known as Edom, and the people, the Edomites, who dwelled south and south west of the Sea of Salt or the Dead Sea.

The other thing this tells us is the general time frame. If the land of Uz is associated with the daughters of Edom or Esau, then it stands to reason that this is post Esau. Esau was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham, and we know that Abraham was around during the middle 1900's BC.

Isaac comes on to the scene around the mid 1800's BC, while Jacob, the brother of Esau was around during the late 1700's BC. For the land of Edom, made up of Edomites, the descendants of Esau, to be identified as Edom then it stands to reason that it would take a generation or two for that land to be established under that name.

And so, the earliest time for that to happen would be around the early to mid 1700's BC. And so, it is certainly possible that Job was on the scene sometime after this time. By the way, to put this general time of the early 1700's into some perspective Joseph, the son of Jacob, had been sold into slavery during the early 1700's BC, and Jacob, (whose name would be changed to Israel), along with the rest of his family, would soon join them after Joseph comes to power in Egypt.

Esau and his family would have been separated from Jacob and his family and so while Jacob is moving to Egypt, Esau and his family were probably dwelling in the area known as Edom which was part of a larger area known as Uz, south of Canaan in the Arabian area.

The other thing to note about the time frame for Job is that the book of Job itself does give us some clues. One clue shows us that Job did live after the flood.

Job 22:15-16 ¹⁵ "Will you keep to the ancient path Which wicked men have trod, ¹⁶ Who were snatched away before their time, Whose foundations were washed away by a river?"

^{NIV} **Job 22:16** They were carried off before their time, their foundations washed away by a flood.

^{ESV} **Job 22:16** They were snatched away before their time; their foundation was washed away.

As to any evidence found in the book of Job that would support Job living before Moses we know that Job himself offered up sacrifices to God.

Job 1:5 ⁵ When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

What does this tell us as it relates to Moses and the giving of the law?

The law given to Moses was clear that only the Levitical priesthood could offer such sacrifices and so Job certainly did live before Moses and the giving of the law. The patriarchs, however, always offered sacrifices as we see with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And so, Job would fit nicely somewhere in this time frame.

If Edom dwelled in the land of Uz then Uz would certainly have included the region south of the Dead Sea. And so, Job would probably have been identified as an Edomite.

Genesis 36:1-9 ^{NAU} Now these are *the records* of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). ² Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; ³ also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. ⁴ Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, ⁵ and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. ⁶ Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to *another* land away from his brother Jacob. ⁷ For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock. ⁸ So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom. ⁹ ***These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.***

Keep in mind that the Edomites were a people who would have been associated with the relinquishing of the birthright and thus would have been a people seen as rejecting the blessing of the firstborn, which in this case would have been the blessing from God that included the spiritual blessing originally given to Abraham.

Genesis 15:1-6 ^{NAU} After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." ² Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." ⁴ Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." ⁵ And He took

him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

And so, in essence, Esau, the grandchild of Abraham, who was the son of Isaac, was seen as one who was cut off from the blessing, while Jacob was then given the blessing of Abraham.

So, in terms of who was identified as a people of God through the blessing of Abraham, where did Esau fall in the scheme of things?

One who was a rebel and one who rejected God and His blessing. And so, despite the fact that Esau was a physical son of Abraham, if you will, he was not seen as one who was part of the spiritual family of Abraham. And Paul points this out when writing to the Romans.

Romans 9:6-16 ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." ⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. ⁹ For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." ¹⁰ And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; ¹¹ for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, ¹² it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." ¹³ Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." ¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." ¹⁶ So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

By the way, this passage regarding the two sons, Jacob and Esau or Edom, is taken from the book of Malachi.

Malachi 1:1-5 ^{NAU} The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi. ² "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"

declares the LORD. "*Yet I have loved Jacob; ³ but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.*" ⁴ Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; thus says the LORD of hosts, "They may build, but I will tear down; and *men* will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom the LORD is indignant forever." ⁵ Your eyes will see this and you will say, "The LORD be magnified beyond the border of Israel!"

The implication is that despite both sons being born of the man who was given the eternal promise from God, (that is Abraham), only one son will receive the blessing according to God's choice. But we need to be careful here because as Paul makes clear in Romans, we're not talking about the physical seed of either son.

Both sons, Esau and Jacob, represent two distinct groups one of which God has called out for Himself. The group that belongs to Esau or Edom is that group that rejects the covenant blessings by being willing to cast it away to please the appetite of the flesh, and the other group that embraces the covenant by faith are those who have the faith of Abraham.

But because we're talking about a spiritual family chosen of God, even a Jew by physical birth can belong to Edom from a spiritual standpoint.

So, what does all of this have to do with Job who was probably an Edomite living in the land of Uz? Technically, he was one who would not have been associated with the blessing of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob as being a people for God's own possession and yet what are we told about Job in verse one?

Job 1:1 ^{NAU} There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was *blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.*

If Job were an Edomite, a people associated with having rejected the blessing of Abraham passed down to Esau's father, Isaac, then what does this tell us about who are the true people of God?

All who are chosen by God who can certainly be associated with any people of the world. It is a spiritual family, not a family descended from any physical lineage. And so, this godly man, Job, was a man of faith who believed in the promises of Abraham, Isaac

and Jacob, despite the fact that his heritage was one of rejecting the blessing as his namesake, Edom or Esau, had done.

God is not bound by borders or nations or peoples, but rather He calls His people out from every corner of the world.

Revelation 5:9-10 ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

By, the way, was it coincidence that the three families of Noah, and even the family of Esau ended up where they ended up?

Acts 17:24-28 ²⁴ "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and ***He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,*** ²⁷ ***that they would seek God,*** if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

So, no matter what part of history we study or what family lived in any particular area or time, it is God who directs history and the people who live in the time frame that He desires for His purposes.

And so, whenever we study these books of the Bible, particularly the historical accounts of the bible, like Genesis, Kings, Chronicles, Hosea, Esther and now Job, it is never ultimately about the people of those books that should be taking center stage, but rather the Creator of such people whose plan is being worked out in time for His glory.

And as we come to the book of Job, though Job is certainly an important character, we will see that he is never meant to be the main character as he is simply identified as a servant of the Most High God.

And next time we'll come back and begin to walk through the book of Job and discover how this man from a region of the world identified with the rebellion of Edom was actually a follower of the

Most High God and would receive special attention from God for specific reasons to God's glory.